



Foreign Agricultural Service

**GAIN Report**

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## **The Netherlands**

### **Poultry and Products**

#### **AgMinister Veerman Takes a New Course**

**2002**

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**Report Highlights:** Former AgMinister Brinkhorst's proposals for stricter rules on husbandry for laying hens and broilers and the prohibition of mink farming have been retracted by the new AgMinister Veerman. In addition, Minister Veerman informed the Parliament of plans to delay changes to the manure policy.

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
The Hague [NL1], NL

The new Dutch Government has dropped several policy initiatives proposed by the previous government. All of those initiatives would have tightened restrictions on agricultural producers. The decision to back off from imposing additional restrictions has been well received within the agricultural community.

***Laying Hens and Broilers***

In a letter to the Parliament, dated October 9, new Agriculture Minister Veerman argued that Minister Brinkhorst's proposal for stricter rules regarding the husbandry of broilers are unnecessary because the sector has already reached an agreement with the Dutch Animal Welfare Organization. Furthermore, for husbandry of laying hens, the Minister will allow the use of an alternative system to the traditional batteries, the so called enhanced cages. Traditional batteries will be prohibited in the EU by January 1, 2012.

***Mink***

For mink production, the new Cabinet will await EU legislation and will not act on a proposal to phase out the sector in ten years. In the meantime, the mink sector will implement their own plan to improve the welfare of minks. The Netherlands is the third largest mink producer in the world, behind Denmark and Russia.

***Manure***

Earlier this month, on October 4, the Cabinet informed the Dutch Parliament of their plans to delay the enforcement of stricter rules for fertilizing agricultural land. The new rules are more feasible for the sector and will reportedly not affect international obligations.

The Product Board for Livestock, Meat and Eggs embraces the policy turn of the new Cabinet, which they judge as positive in maintaining the competitiveness of the Dutch sector. The Dutch Farmers Organization (LTO), concedes with the Product Board but find the amendment of the manure legislation as seriously shortcoming.